

The Meetinghouse News

The First Congregational Church of Madison

February 2011

A number of years ago, I bought an oil lamp in a Jerusalem antique shop (shown below). I know many of us have oil lamps around the house in handy places, prepared for the next power outage. But this one is a bit different. It came from an archeological dig in or near Jerusalem and is about 2,000 years old; at least that's what the "certificate" says.

Oil lamps like this one are not rare, except to us. They were produced in mass quantities in ancient times and archeologists are able to date the sites where they are digging by the style of oil lamps they find. This one may or may not be authentic, but it doesn't matter to me. I appreciate knowing precisely what Jesus is talking about when he says... "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)



So, in my imagination, I track the path of this lamp. It started with a potter, who worked and fired clay to make a variety of household items for sale – bowls, jugs and cups, etc., and some individual bought it for his/her family. It was brought home, equipped with a wick, filled with olive oil, and placed on a ledge (lampstand) in the house. Not much light, but enough to get around after dark. This is one small slice of our ancestors' culture; lamps like this had been used by our families for several thousand years before, and inside lighting didn't change much until the 1700's. Some cultures still use them.

This lamp belonged to a family, or maybe a succession of families. Is it possible that someone heard Jesus speak, "let your light shine," and found themselves meditating on those words as the sun went down? I have an image of somebody holding this lamp, now lit, wondering how to make good works happen, how to glorify God. How can I live those words of Jesus?

And one day, something happened. This lamp is not broken, so it probably wasn't thrown away. It's not as if something more energy-efficient came along. Maybe it was buried when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 73 A.D., leveling and burning everything, including the Temple. It's likely that the family who originally owned this lamp suffered hardship, and it may have been extreme. This is still true for that part of the world, and of course, many other places. In Madison, it's not easy for us to appreciate that kind of danger.

But darkness comes in different forms. Many things happen in our lives that challenge the light, that challenge faith. The light flickers and sometimes doesn't shine very brightly. But God working through us together can keep each of individually burning with purpose. It's a positive flame that spreads, and as we press on faithfully in this new year, God will do astonishing things. *"...in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:3-4)*

See you soon, **Christopher Nichols, Sr. Pastor**

Chris

**PASTOR'S
CORNER**

FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

OUR CHURCH IN 2011

Our pastor, Chris Nichols often reminds us that “we are a family, not a business.” I need to take particular heed of this advice because you have entrusted me to have general oversight of the interests of our church. As a family, some of us “relatives” don’t see eye to eye, but I know every family member is committed to what he or she believes will lead to the betterment of our Church.

In some areas, we are thriving. Under Chris Nichol’s leadership and vision, our parking lots are full again. Our church school, junior youth, and senior youth groups are attracting new families. Our various choirs are large and talented. Attendance at both our Sunday services and WOW, is up, and plate collections are up. Our dedication to wider mission work here and abroad is well known and praised. Several small groups have sprung up this past year for a deeper and more personal faith exploration experience. Our church buildings are continually booked with events. Compared to many other UCC churches nationally, we are considered robust and thriving.

However, (and there’s always an however) we have real concerns that we cannot forget. The economy and stock market have taxed our ability to raise funds from current members and use the trust funds established by former members. We wish we could offer more programming and services. Our staff is expected to do far more than we can pay them for. Sadly, we could not budget well deserved raises for a second year in a row, and had to cut back on our medical benefits that we offer.

Our family spirit requires us each to be the solution, not the problem. If you haven’t pledged in 2011, please consider it your duty as a member. If you are not on a committee, please say “yes” when you are next asked. If you have a talent, share it with your church family; sing in a choir, teach church school, volunteer on FCC sponsored Soup Kitchen or Habitat days. Get to know all the members in our family. We would love to get to know you. Friend us on Facebook to see what’s going on.

Now is a great time to make our church family even stronger.

Carole Pinney
Chair of Council



LAY CARING MINISTRY

The LCM's New Years Resolutions

The Lay Caring Ministry is keeping its New Year's resolve to host a Cancer Support Group. The first meeting will be held on

**January 29, 2011 at 9:30 am
in Hubley Hall of the Church House.**

This group is open to those who are living with cancer, caregivers, survivors, family and friends. Wherever you are on this arduous path, you need not walk alone. You have a team from our church family eager to support you.

During the week of January 9, Boyd will be stocking the LCM's new bookshelf in the parlor with books from the Yale Divinity School library. Look for their titles on the LCM bulletin board. Boyd recently read one of these books entitled Finding the Right Words by Wilfred Bockelman.

The author suggests the helpful verbal responses in sensitive situations such as a death in the family, a divorce, the loss of job, or a life-threatening illness. Boyd was so enthused about this short book he ordered six copies for the shelf. Do let us and others know if you find it worthwhile. We also welcome your input on any books which may bring comfort or enlightenment to our church family. You may post your recommendations our LCM Bulletin Board. A good read can certainly warm the spirit on a bleak winter's day.

Carol Robbins
LCM Chair



CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE

"sharing and praising God together"



As we enter the new year, we reflect on the five months that our church has been offering the Contemporary Worship Service and thank God for our ability to spread His word in the a new and different way. We have had wonderful support by so many including all of the people who are attending our Church for the first time. Thank you all for making our new service a success!

As we move into 2011, we will continue to praise the Lord in a contemporary style, with music led by the Worship Team (including guitars, keyboard, and singers), and the same scripture based sermon as the traditional service given by the Rev. Dr. Chris Nichols.



The service is held each Sunday in the Chapel at 11:45 am. Hope to see you there!



Here's where to get the latest scoop on what's happening musically in the church! For even more information, call Nathan at: (203) 245-2739, ext. 12.



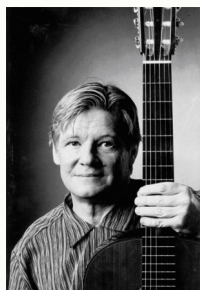
CHRISTMAS EVE RECAP!

A big “thank you” goes to all the singers, handbells and musicians who helped make this entire Christmas season such a beautiful and meaningful experience. The Christmas Eve Pageant was a big success, and the Adult Choir’s presentation of the cantata *God With Us* touched many hearts. Special thanks goes to our soloists who worked very hard—singers Cindy O’Sullivan, Will Tuthill, Ken Dreier (who also played trumpet), Jillian Huberty, as well as C. J. Tomasevich (trumpet) and Lia Tosiello (flute).



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE: “500 Years Of Music For Guitar”

On Saturday, January 22nd, 2011 at 7:00 pm, American guitarist Peter Griggs presents an overview of the modern guitarist's repertoire from the Renaissance to the Contemporary. Music by composers as diverse as Gaspar Sanz, Johann Sebastian Bach, Bartolome Calatuyud, Django Rheinhardt, Baden Powell and Thelonious Monk will be performed along with several of Griggs' own compositions.



Peter Griggs is an accomplished guitarist who recently presented more than 300 solo concerts throughout the USA and Europe. A native of New York City, he has been based in recent years in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Join us for this upcoming event! \$15 recommended donation (students are free).

CHANCEL CHOIR TO SING IN NEW LONDON!

On Sunday, January 30th at 4:00 pm, our very own Chancel Choir will be participating in the Ecumenical Children’s Festival held at the 2nd Congregational Church in New London!

They will be singing a beautiful, two-part arrangement of *The Holly and the Ivy*, and all the singers from many different congregations around the New London area (about 100) will join together to sing *Let All the World Sing Praise!*, *Paris Angelicus* (yes, in Latin), and *Joy in My Heart*.



You are invited to come!

See Nathan for directions to the church.

VALENTINE'S DANCE: Saturday, Feb. 12th at 7:00 pm

The Nathan Bayreuther Jazz Trio will once again perform in the Church House's Angela Hubley Hall! The Jazz Trio, formed in 1998, has played numerous concerts, receptions, dances and other functions across the state and recently recorded their first CD *Pure Imagination*. This event is free to the public although donations are graciously accepted and will benefit the church's music program.



This event is free of charge, but be sure to call in advance to reserve seats as table space is limited. Light refreshments will be served. Call: (203) 245-2739, ext. 21 to reserve your seat, or you may also see Nathan after worship in Hubley Hall!

“BUY-A-KEY” FUNDRAISER FOR THE ORGAN!”

Our historic 1930 Moller organ desperately needs to have the three manuals (keyboards) recovered! The glue holding on the ivory key-tops has failed, and the brittle ivory, worn paper-thin after over 80 years, is coming off and splitting apart. The A. Thompson-Allen organ company, the same company which installed the organ in 1930 and still takes care of it today, will be having the keys professionally recovered in bone this summer, but it is not an inexpensive undertaking.



To help defray the costs (\$7,000), we are having a “Buy-A-Key” fundraiser!

There are a total of 108 keys that will be recovered, and for \$30, you can “sponsor” one of those keys! A poster will soon be in Angela Hubley Hall, and with each donation, your name will be displayed on one of those keys—you can even choose what key you'd like to sponsor! More information will be available very soon!

OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE ADULT MINISTRY COMMISSION

Explorations - Meeting God in the most Unexpected Places –You are invited to join us for a weekly time of fellowship, prayer and spiritual growth meant to stretch your faith led by Rev. Nichols. Traveling together, using our Bibles, current authors and our own life experiences, we will find God in the news and our daily lives. We will meet on the **first and second Tuesdays of the month. A light supper will be available at 6:00 p.m. in Hubley Hall. The group will meet 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the Parlor. We will not meet in December, see you in January.**

Women's Connection – Jan. 5th, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Beth Abbott,



121 Overbrook Road, Madison - All women are warmly invited for a great evening of fellowship and spiritual encouragement from God's Word! Women's Connection meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Hope you can come and bring a friend! If you have any questions, contact Beth Abbott at 203-421-4105 or bethabbott@snet.net.

Men's Breakfast Group - Men, YOU yes YOU are invited to **JOIN US** in the



Parlor on Tuesday mornings 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. If you need to leave early it's OK. Just turn up as you are able, feel free to bring a friend. This is a great opportunity to meet with fellow men of all ages in open discussion of God's word. Need more information, wish to be added to our list, contact the office. We look forward to seeing you.



CD Ministry - Adult Ministry has purchased copies of the New Testament on CD which are available in the Library. The Library, located in the Parlor, is an honor system based process for you to take books as you wish and then return for the next person to enjoy.

New Ladies Bible Study Starting! All ladies are warmly invited to attend a



6 week Bible Study, **Friday mornings, 9:30am, January 14th - February 18th** at the home of Sheri Pasqualoni (6 John's Path)!

This weekly study uses different chapters throughout the Bible to teach us how to live more Godly lives as women, especially through love, patience, gentleness, forgiveness... Each week will have its own topic, and will not be contingent on prior sessions. Feel free to come join us at any time! For further information, contact Kathy Nichols (203-318-0044)

OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE ADULT MINISTRY COMMISSION

(cont'd)

NEW!!!!!!!**Interfaith Speaker Series -- SHARING THE ABRAHAMIC BLESSING****The first in a series of speakers from other Abrahamic faiths is scheduled for Monday, February 28th at 7:30 PM in Hubley Hall.**

Omer Bajwa is the Coordinator of Muslim Life in the Chaplain's Office at Yale. He earned his Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary, and he has been engaged in religious service, social activism and education outreach for the past nine years. Before coming to Yale, he served as the Interim Muslim Chaplain at Cornell University from 2007 - 2008. He holds an M. A. in Near Eastern Studies with a specialization in Islamic Studies and an M. S. in Communication from Cornell University. His interests include Islam in the United States, multifaith activities, Islam and the global media and transnational religious and intellectual networks.

Save the date—March 7, 7:30 p.m.***Our speaker will discuss Judaism***

The Adult Ministry Commission has more new and exciting programs planned for Fall/Winter 2011. Please see future editions of the Bulletin and Meetinghouse News for details.

If you have any questions or ideas contact Carol Peragine, Chair, at 203-318-5017 or caperagine@comcast.net



WOMEN'S LEAGUE LUNCHEON – JANUARY 6, 2011

All women of our church and friends are invited to meet in Hubley Hall of the Church House at 12:00 noon to share in a short devotion, prior to lunch.



“If These Bottles Could Talk”

Bob Green will entertain us with stories of the past.

If you are not on our calling list, please contact the church office at 203-245-2739 x20 to make a reservation.

WORSHIP ON WEDNESDAY - Wednesday, February 16th 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel.

Fellow church member Marie Reeve, who serves on the Worship Commission, Lay Caring Ministry, and WOW Planning Group, will give the message:

"God's Presence Through Darkness": a personal journey of faith through the devastating loss of their eldest son, Richard, and how God's guidance and Love continue to give them "New Life".

The WOW service will also include special music, prayers, and readings. If you would like to share a poem, scripture, or prayer, please email alisonhubley@gmail.com.

Join us afterwards for refreshments and a fellowship time. Childcare will be provided if you contact the church office in advance.



THE CONGREGATION COOKS—LAST CALL!!!

A book of memories and recipes.

January may be the start of a new year, but it is the last month for submitting recipes and memories for our new cookbook

THE CONGREGATION COOKS.

We plan to be around each Sunday in January to answer questions and accept recipes, just look for the Cookbook sign at coffee hour.



You can also email your recipes and stories to kris_miller_iii@sbcglobal.net, drop them off in the main office, or give them to one of the members of the cookbook committee: Kris Miller, Vicki Littell, or Doug Payette.

A thank you to those of you who have already submitted recipes and stories, and a Happy New Year full of wonderful eating to all.

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS – Come and join in the fun and fellowship!

SOUP & BINGO - What a great way to start off Saturday evening **January 22nd at 5:00 p.m.**, in Hubley Hall of the Church House. The Fellowship Commission will provide hot homemade soups, chili, macaroni and cheese, bread, and beverages. All ages of adults and children are invited to play Bingo and win some great prizes. Bingo cards are \$2 each or 3/\$5. Make sure to bring a dessert to share plus something to mark your Bingo card (such as pennies, M&Ms, Cheerios, etc.) Sign up on the Fellowship bulletin board (near the kitchen in Hubley Hall).



DINNER & A MOVIE—March 5th at 5:30 p.m......Don't stay home and cook.....Come to our Dinner and a Movie night. Your wonderful dinner will be prepared by the Fellowship committee..and if that isn't enough.....Popcorn and a Movie to boot... Sign up on the Fellowship Board

Coffee Hour —Every Sunday immediately after service in Hubley Hall. You are warmly invited to join this fun event. We often have over one hundred guests, great home-made treats, juice, and fellowship



ANOTHER CASTING CALL!

Need to shake off the winter blues?!?!?
Start singing warm-ups in the shower!
Put on your dancin' shoes!

"Music From the Movies"



We are looking for...

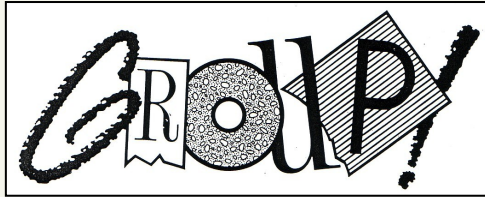
Re...
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For reasons beyond our control, the curtain has come down on "Music From The Movies" which was scheduled to be held March 26, 2011.

Please accept regrets from the organizers

...want to sign up immediately (and no later than...
...Sundays after coffee hour and individually as...
...posted on the music bulletin board in Hubley Hall of the...
...contact director Barb Genter by phoning her at 203-245-7100 or by...
...barbysunshine@snet.net.

Don't miss this great opportunity for fun and fellowship. . .Let's go on with the show!



FCC High School GROUP!

Fun evenings of group games, discussions – and food! - are designed to help you grow closer to God and your friends. Any high school student is welcome – church membership is not required. To stay in the loop for GROUP events, make sure you are on our e-mail list; simply send a message to Loryn Pinney (ltp.smile4me@gmail.com) or Rev. C. Nichols (jcn@snet.net).

GROUP! Meetings. Throughout the year, GROUP meets most **Sunday nights at 5:17PM**, at locations announced during the prior week via e-mail and Facebook.

Leadership Team. Every **Thursday at 5:17PM**, a group of students gathers in the Church House for fellowship, food, a devotional moment, and planning for GROUP events. Any interested students are welcome!

Confirmation is a meaningful, year-long adventure for high school students leading toward active membership in the First Congregational church of Madison. To participate, simply participate in GROUP activities. Contact Rev. Nichols for more information

Coming up :

February 24-25, 2011 NYC Interfaith Mission Overnight—serving food in soup kitchens and food pantries through the Youth Service Opportunities Project. (www.ysop.org). \$65— reduced cost through support from the Pardee Fund. Meet Friday, Feb. 25th at 10:30 a.m. Return 8:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 26th.

“YSOP gave me a chance to prove that despite growing up in an upper-class shoreline area, helping people is very important to me and it’s something I love to do. Working at YSOP was an amazing experience, and I feel very rewarded and fulfilled after leaving the soup kitchen. It’s amazing how so many people think they will never end up homeless. However after talking to the people at YSOP, it is clear that homelessness isn’t a lifestyle people choose, and it can happen to anyone. YSOP in New York does wonderful things and I look forward to working with them for many years to come.” ~Julia Keene



Sunday, March 20, 2011—Interfaith Progressive Dinner. Watch for details.

July 9—16, 2011 Appalachia Service Project (see following page)



Appalachia Service Project

July 9-16, 2011

A Mission Trip Sponsored by the First Congregational Church, Madison, CT

Grow closer to God while serving others!

Our experience will be organized by the **Appalachia Service Project**. "After a few days of hard work repairing homes with ASP, your hands will grow a little tougher, your arms a little stronger, and your relationship with God a whole lot deeper. You'll return home to your community with a passion for service, a renewed compassion for other people, and a fresh appreciation for your place and purpose in this world. Best of all, you'll discover first-hand that regardless of geography, education, or economic class, we are all equal members of the family of God." (www.asphome.org).

Who: Adult church members and high school students who are participating in the youth GROUP of the First Congregational Church. To reserve a place in this trip, contact Rev. C. Nichols and turn in the deposit (see below).

Where: A location in West Virginia TBA. Lodging TBA.

Dates: **July 9-16, 2011.** Beginning in January, 2011, our group will begin having meetings to prepare for the trip. It is important that you attend each so that you will know what's happening and form relationships with the crew traveling with you. Sign-up deadline: April 1, 2011.

Total Cost: approx. \$600. The final cost will depend on the number of students participating. Students requiring financial support will be expected to participate in our fundraising events. Through these efforts, we are usually able to reduce the final cost by about half. **A deposit of \$100 payable to "First Congregational Church" is due January 23, 2011.** Payments of \$150 each will be due in February and April; the balance will be due on June 1, 2011.

Includes: Transportation by van, food & lodging. Participants will also need a small amount of money for meals while traveling.

Recreation: White-water rafting on the New River (tentative).

Support: Our church membership has strongly supported our mission projects in the past. They will help us. Various committees and groups of the church, including our own, will be sponsoring fundraisers on behalf of this project. It is important that all participants contribute their time to these activities and attend church during the months preceding our departure. People need to see whom they are supporting.

Registration: Let Rev. Nichols know of your interest, turn in your deposit and you will be included on the list of participants. Please call with any questions! jcn@snet.net or 203-245-2739.



Christmas Thanks

On behalf of the Women's League and Conn. Valley Hospital, I would like to thank each of you who made a gift donation for the patients at Christmas. I brought up 4 full large trash bags, plus loose items, and they were thrilled!

Thanks again for your support!!
Cathy Hopkins

*Thank
You*

Below is their note to us:

"Thank you ever so much for your generosity this holiday season. With the closure of Cedarcrest Hospital (another State psych. hospital) this past year, our patient population and our needs have grown. Your donated gifts were given to those in most need. Our patients in the General Psychiatry Division often have limited or no family connection. Those gifts are truly appreciated. Their day was made a bit more merry and bright."

NEW CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

**Saturday morning, January 29th, at 9:30
In Hubley Hall of the Church House**

The first meeting of the FCC Madison Cancer Support Group. The Support Group is open to all: people currently going through cancer treatments, friends and family members, cancer survivors, people that have lost someone to cancer, and those that just want to know. The idea is that these meetings should be a place to share information, stories, laughs, thoughts, and feelings, as well as a place to find comfort, understanding, and a warm, knowing touch. Plus we'll have coffee available.

Since Saturday the 29th is the initial meeting of the group, discussion and thought will be given to how best to structure the group so that it meets the current needs of those attending. We will also talk about maintaining confidentiality, as well as the sharing of contact and resource information.

The basic underpinning of these meetings, though, comes from 1 Corinthians 13:13: *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING! TACKLE HUNGER!
Join Souper Bowl of Caring 2011.
Sunday, February 6th

Thousands of youth from churches across the country, including several in Madison, will **Tackle Hunger on Super Bowl Sunday, February 6th**. You can help us provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to the needy.

How? Join the Souper Bowl of Caring.



On **Sunday, February 6th**, there will be a can drive and donation pot in church. All contributions will go to our local Madison Community Services Food Pantry. Please bring your extra cans and a few dollars to help out right in Madison on Super Bowl Sunday! Call Kate Adams (203-245-3910) with any questions. Thanks!

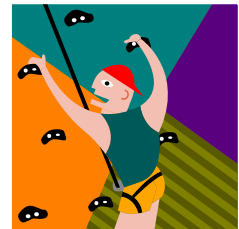
JYG ROCK CLIMBING ADVENTURE AT MOUNTAIN FUN!!

Join us for our annual trip to Mountain Fun....

Wednesday, February 9th, 5:30pm –8:30pm (approx.)

Cost is **\$20 per climber**, includes Chinese food before and Ice Cream Sundaes after! Meet in Hubley Hall at 5:30pm sharp!

*Yes, you may bring **A friend!***



We need drivers to get us there—parents who drive may bring younger siblings to climb with us.

Please let me know by Feb. 5th if you can attend!

Lynlunn@fccmadison.org



JYG BOWLING AT AMF SAYBROOK LANES!

Sunday, March 6th, after worship until 2:30 (approx.)

Join us for lunch after the 10:00am Worship service for lunch in Hubley Hall.

We will leave for AMF at 12:00noon and bowl from 12:30 -2:00 p.m.

\$16.00 includes lunch before, 90 min of bowling and your shoes!

This is also a **bring A friend event!**

We will need drivers—parents who drive may bring younger siblings to bowl with us.

Please let me know if you can come by March 1st. Lynlunn@fccmadison.org



The First Congregational Church Of Madison

26 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443
Overlooking the Green
An Open and Affirming Church

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
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Madison, CT
Permit #7

Change
Service
Requested

February 2011 Issue

Sunday Worship Services

Traditional Service

10:00 a.m.

In the Meetinghouse

Contemporary Service

11:45 a.m.

In the Chapel

Worship on Wednesday

3rd Wednesday each month

7:30 p.m.

In the Chapel

Sunday School

10:15-11:15 a.m.

Communion Served First
Sunday Each Month

Madison Access TV

Sunday 12:00 noon

Monday 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. &

9:00 p.m.

Our Pastors:

The Rev. Christopher Nichols
Senior Pastor

The Rev. Boyd M. Johnson
Minister of Pastoral Care And Visitation

Phone: 203-245-2739

Fax: 203-245-3341

E-mail: mainoffice@fccmadison.org

Website: fccmadison.org

**Deadline for the
March issue is
February 3rd!!**

**Email to:
Laurie Satterwhite
mainoffice@fccmadison.org**

**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**